



Willington, Mary Frances
Leading lady Journalists

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LEADING LADY JOURNALISTS

by

Mary Frances Billington

[Excerpt from Pearson's magazine
July, 1896]

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LEADING LADY JOURNALISTS BY



E. F. Billington

WE are numerous enough, we women of the Press, to have a society all our own to further our mutual interests. Fiction has made heroines of us, and the "lady journalist" has figured in more than one recent play and burlesque. But to the outside world, which really knows very little of how its newspapers are written and made up for it, we remain a mystery, and the remark which a distinguished Indian civilian made to me lately to the effect that he "always wondered what kind of fellows those could be that wrote all about the fashions," probably sums up the knowledge of a good many people as to the position of women in the profession.

Of late years the number of women engaged in journalistic work has undoubtedly increased, till they may be enumerated by some hundreds. Indeed, there are considerably over two hundred who belong to the Society of Women Journalists, and a very large proportion of the members of the Writers' Club are solely engaged in newspaper occupation, while every editor can tell of the keen and growing competition for every post or commission in which a woman can be, or imagines she can be, employed.

The Press Gallery of the House of Commons remains absolutely closed to the feminine reporter, and there is good reason to think it will remain so, and for the "rough and tumble" work of outside reporting the ordinary proprietor will continue to prefer a man; but there is much that women can and do perform, and of that I propose to speak here.

At the risk of seeming inconsistent in the face of the position which other women and I, myself, have been fortunate enough to secure, I am bound, at the outset, to repeat an opinion that I have several times expressed before, that the career is very far from being a generally suitable one for women.

The qualities which make for success in it are by no means the distinctively characteristic ones of the sex, and the true instinct of the journalist is based on a combination of intense, almost abnormal, powers of observation, the faculty of recording, with ease and promptitude, a sense of proportion and space, together with that more abstract ability to judge tendencies and the feelings of masses, rather than the deduction from isolated instances, which is more perhaps the feminine habit of mind. Together with a liberal education and very wide reading, physical health must be given an exceedingly prominent place in any woman's equipment for the calling.

Before I joined (with its first number) the *Daily Graphic*, with which I still have the honour of being very closely associated, I had had rather more than two years with the

Echo, so that I can speak with experience of both morning and evening work. In the latter, the hours are certainly more reasonable, but all that one does, whether in the form of notes for the first editions, or in special descriptive accounts of events occurring in the afternoon for the late issues, has to be turned out at an exhaustingly high rate of speed.

A morning paper often involves very late hours at the office, and I have wondered, sometimes, how many women there are who could stand such a day (among many more like it that I have had) as that on which the Shahzada arrived in this country, when we were in Portsmouth Dockyard at nine in the morning, inspected the ship, saw the various receptions and addresses presented on board, attended the Queen's Birthday Review on Southsea Common, came up to town in the special train, and had three columns of material to write on arrival.

However, special correspondence is not the department allotted usually to feminine hands, and I think I stand pretty well alone of my sex in what I have done and hope to do of it. The greater part of woman's work on the Press lies in more domestic interests and the chronicling of fashions; the recording of social functions in which celebrities and pretty dress have their part, as weddings and bazaars; the discussion of philanthropic subjects; the special interests of the factory, labouring, and toiling classes of the sex; and such topics as the education of the young, cookery, furniture, and nursing, are those with which "Our Lady Contributor" generally deals.

Exceptions of course there are, and Miss Flora Shaw, of the *Times*, stands conspicuously forward among them. Very few would ever imagine that the weekly review of what is doing in "The Colonies" is the work of a feminine pen, so well informed, so exhaustive in statistical knowledge, so essentially statesmanlike is it; and it is through Miss Shaw's hands that all of Colonial interest which appears in "the leading journal" passes.

Miss Shaw is very retiring, and averse to anything like self-advertisement, but she has twice been induced to read papers before the Colonial Institute, which have attracted great

attention from their brilliant mastery of Imperial problems, and their sound economic reasoning. She undertook long Special Commissions for the *Times*, both in South Africa and Australia, her letters on the sugar industry of Queensland and the vexed question of Kanaka labour having been particularly noteworthy on account of the completeness of her inquiries, and the independence of the opinions she expressed.

The Belgian correspondent of the *Times* is Mme. Couvreur, known better, perhaps, to English readers as "Tasma," the writer of several very clever novels. She was born in Tasmania—hence the pseudonym she adopted for her first publication—and has travelled very widely. Indeed, she is one of the very few women living who can claim to have rounded Cape Horn in a small sailing vessel—an experience she realised in the course of a six months' cruise.

Her husband, the late M. Couvreur, was *Times* correspondent for many years, and on his death the authorities of Printing House Square, knowing her attainments alike as a woman of letters and a linguist, offered her the succession to his duties. She has been markedly successful in the work she took up, and to mention one instance only, the full and accurate summary of the opinions of leading Dutch politicians (for the area under her ken includes Holland) upon the Jameson raid in the Transvaal which she sent home, was an exceedingly useful contribution to the public comprehension of a difficult situation. For many years the tradition of Delane's dislike of writing women lingered at the *Times*, but the *régime* of Mr. Buckle and Mr. Moberley Bell has quite swept that aside.

Of ladies successfully filling the editorial chair there are but few, and among them the first place belongs by right to Miss Lowe, of the *Queen*. Knowing everybody of social or literary importance, Miss Lowe possesses at once a leading qualification for the position she has occupied for several years; but over and beyond that she has that true journalistic instinct which is a rare enough attribute in a man, and in a woman is remarkable.

She knows exactly what her public want, is very quick to recognise talent, literary or artistic, in any young aspirant brought to her

notice, and there are many now doing well on the press who owe their start to her perception of the possibilities in them. Three or four days a week she spends at her offices in Bream's Buildings, and shirks none of the dull routine business of "making-up," proof reading, or attending to correspondence.

She has personally the greatest detestation of publicity, however; can never be induced to give a photograph of herself for publication, and even refused to grant to the late Edmund Yates the permission, which he asked as a favour to an old friend, to include her in the *World* series of "Celebrities at Home." To venture to write of her pretty house and her pleasant "At homes" would probably incur her lasting vexation, and no one who knows and values Miss Lowe's friendship, as I do, would lightly take that risk.

Gossip had plenty to say and to surmise when, about two years ago, Mrs. Frederick Beer became editress of the *Sunday Times*. It indicated a speedy amalgamation with the *Observer* (in which Mr. Beer is proprietorially interested), and many other startling things which it is hardly necessary to say have not happened.

The simple fact was that Mrs. Beer felt rather strongly on the need for a Sunday paper taking somewhat wider and more imperial views than were circulated by the penny journals coming out on that day. Colonial and Indian matters she felt deserved a fuller recognition, and while things domestic, social, theatrical, and artistic should enjoy due place, they should not alone fill her columns.

She has succeeded well, and has gathered round her a strong and capable staff. She has not hesitated on many occasions to take a view independent of party or convention, and has been scrupulously fair in allowing all sides of any question to be fairly heard. Under her direction the paper has largely increased its circulation.

Curiously enough, it once before had feminine control, when it belonged to Miss Alice Cornwell—that "Princess Midas," of Australian gold-mining success, who was for a season or two a meteoric star in the

London firmament. Mrs. Beer is *chatelaine* of the finest house in Chesterfield Gardens, where she is a most hospitable hostess, and where her beautiful drawing-rooms are constantly at the disposal of rising musical artists or charitable societies for their meetings.

It is always an article of faith in Fleet Street that the good editor is born and not made, and in the case of Miss Maud Bennett, the editress of *Home Notes*, that belief is amply justified. Some two and a half years ago, Mr. C. Arthur Pearson—whose sis-

ter-in-law she is—recognised in her the qualities which make for success in the direction of a paper, and appointed her to her position.

Of journalistic experience she had had none whatever, but she thoroughly understood domestic economy, using the words in their fullest sense, and she soon manifested the soundest possible judgment in the line she developed, and the features of interest she suggested and introduced. Over the dress and dressmaking, cookery, and nursing sections of her charmingly bright little weekly, she is able to exercise the supervision which



The Editress of the *Sunday Times*.

comes of practical knowledge, and not a recipe appears that she does not herself test.

She is young, very vivacious in conversation, and expresses her always moderate and sensible opinions in pleasant form. Walking is her great enjoyment and recreation in the very rare holidays she manages to get. for "Isobel," with her *Home Notes*, her *Home Cookery*, her *Dressmaking at Home*, and her *Fashions for Children*, is one of the very busiest women on the London Press.

Lastly to be mentioned of the editorial sisterhood is Mrs. Comyns, of the

become the recognised organ of cage-bird fanciers, both amateur and professional.

Perhaps no woman journalist is a dearer personality to her readers than "Madge," of *Truth* (see p. 111), Mrs. Humphry in private life, and the sweetest-voiced and most graciously mannered of Irish women. Mr. Charles Williams, the well-known war correspondent, claims a share in having introduced Mrs. Humphry to Press life, and to her certainly belongs the credit of having invented the bright, gossipy "letter" travelling over so wide a range of womanly interests.

"Madge" has been imitated by scores of writers, and her "letter" form has been adopted by dozens of papers, in degrees of failure ranging from commonplace twaddle to ponderous philosophies; from rankest vulgarity to incomprehensible highfalutin', but no one has ever hit off her inimitable vivacity or her wisely discriminating choice of subject.

She is the dress and fashion authority of the *Daily News*, where she writes of gowns at Sandown and Ascot, at drawing-rooms and private views, with that admirable blending of technical knowledge and pleasant fancy which really helps the stay-at-home woman to realise the glories she does not see. She has made herself a mistress of expert knowledge of bicycling dress, and is specially clever in things culinary, as is evidenced by the book she has just brought out, called "Cookery up to Date."

With her sister, Miss Ethel Lloyd, she writes the weekly column of "Tea-table Talk" in the *Globe*. Miss Lloyd, too, is a very busy journalist, contributing to the *Daily Telegraph* their regular fashion articles, and being responsible to them for Society weddings and such social functions. She is also



Miss S. Carpenter
AND
Miss Honor Morton



Photos by Muncey,
Kilburn, and
Goulton May, Richmond.

Feathered World. So many women have their pretty and interesting hobby in their aviary that Mrs. Comyns was well advised in offering them a paper in which all bearing upon the subject could be fully discussed.

She possessed alike the scientific knowledge, the real love of birds, and the "news-paper instinct" necessary to render such a venture a success, and she has conducted it with so much spirit and enterprise that it has

a leading member of the editorial staff of the *Lady's Pictorial*.

Miss Susan Carpenter is no less widely read, though the anonymity which is such a characteristic of English journalism has concealed her identity from even the majority of editors to whose columns she contributes. For she belongs to the staff of the Press Association, and her work is therefore multiplied and sent out broadcast from the Land's End to the Orkneys and Shetlands.

Most painstaking, conscientious, and accurate of women journalists, she is also one of the most industrious, and before a Royal wedding, a Court ball, or a drawing-room she seems to spend her days in rushing from great lady to Court dress-makers, from florist to coiffeur,

to see and ascertain the details of the fine costumes that will be worn, while her nights are occupied in writing out the descriptions of them.

She comes of an Irish family honourably known in progressive movements, and is related to the late Miss Mary Carpenter. Her connection with the Press may be said to have arisen by chance, for, after a long tour in Australia, she wrote for

The Lady an important series of letters on the true position and prospects of educated women in the Colonies. The articles were of high value from their truthful and independent views, and had the effect of checking certain "Philanthropists" who were sending unfortunate ladies out to direst distress.

Since then she has drifted more and more into Fleet Street, and has written several stories, though not under her own name. In addition now to writing a very good weekly *resumé* for the *Belfast Northern Whig*, of what women are doing week by week, she finds time to do a large amount of work for several leading papers, and to manifest considerable active interest in the Unionist cause in London.

As an "all round" journalist Miss Hulda

Friedrichs, of the *Westminster Gazette* and *Budget*, takes high place. By birth she is German, but she is an exceptional linguist, and no one reading her bright, observant descriptive work, or her pungent little notes, would ever dream that she is expressing herself in what is not strictly her own tongue.

She has been upon the London press for some twelve years, and now takes a large share of the editorial work of the *Budget*. It is a view strongly held by her that women should do their work, whatever it is, without being "fussed over" and written about as remarkable phenomena.

Her own bias in journalism has always been towards topics of general interest, and fashions and domestic concerns have not fallen much

under her notice. She enjoys the personal friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, with whom she has several times stayed at Hawarden, and has recently brought out a book, giving a fascinating little picture of the ex-Premier at home "In the Evening of his Days."

Mrs. Fenwick-Miller's name is almost too well known to need any remarks about her newspaper work. As a mem-

ber of the London School Board, where she was chairwoman of several of the special committees, and took a prominent part in bringing various scandals and abuses to light; as a writer on physiology and hygiene; and as a lecturer, not only upon women's suffrage, of which she is a warm advocate, but upon social and literary topics, many and diverse, she has circles of friends, readers and listeners who, perhaps, would not have known of her had all her work been veiled under the countless unsigned columns she has penned in her busy life.

For, as "Filomena" she has for many years written a syndicated "letter" which appears in several of the leading provincial journals, she has been a constant leader



MRS. FENWICK-MILLER,

Photo by Emberson, Strand.

writer for two of the most important dailies which are issued outside the Metropolis, and edits and contributes largely to a monthly magazine called *Outward Bound*, which has a large and exclusively colonial circulation.

Her record of dress and feminine doings in the *Illustrated London News* is one of

her since she first began writing in the *Queen* in 1886, a post she only resigned on Col. Coke being ordered to Egypt at almost momentary notice when in command of the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

Mrs. Coke's aim has always been specially to help the "mere average woman," for

whom she has no lofty feelings of disdain, and who, probably for financial reasons, cannot call in professional decorative advice, yet who desires pretty rooms and harmonious surroundings.

Many thou-

sands of pounds are yearly spent under her advice, and wherever possible she supports British industries, but her invariable rule is to give her correspondents just and due value for

their money, whether half-a-crown or a thousand pounds are involved. She is a charming writer on many very diverse subjects, and has that delightful "literary touch" which comes alone of much reading and wide travel.

Lady Greville ranks among the regular members of the Press, by reason of her vivacious column, "Place aux Dames," of the *Graphic*. She was one of the late Edmund Yates' "discoveries," and in earlier years much of what was lightest and brightest in the *World* was from her pen, both in social articles and crisp paragraphs.

As an authority on women's sports and pastimes she has no rivals, and has written much on these topics, while in fiction she has also been very successful. A daughter of the fourth Duke of Montrose, it is hardly a matter for wonder, indeed, that such hereditary influences should have produced one in whom daring, brilliancy, and romance were united. Lady Greville has edited one or two papers, and been associated with many at different times, but a somewhat severe accident a few months ago has lately



Photo by
Lafayette, Dublin.



the features of that stately weekly, and, not content with all the work thus required, she has lately become editress of the *Woman's Signal*, which she is fast raising from the hopeless faddism and "anti-man" partizan-ship which formerly distinguished it.

The "Society Woman" as journalist is another study, and as filling a foremost place both socially and journalistically, one would name Mrs. Talbot Coke, the leading authority on art furniture and home decoration, and part proprietress of *Hearth and Home*. She is a sister of Lady Glyn, is married to Col. Talbot Coke, D.A.G. to the Duke of Connaught at Aldershot; and her daughter, Mrs. Langton Bailey, bids fair to become also an exponent of what is needed in "The House Beautiful."

In advising the bewildered bride or the puzzled matron as to how to paper and adorn any domicile from a shooting box to a palace, Mrs. Coke seems equally at home, and she has such a particularly kind and gracious manner in conveying her counsel to even the most Philistine persons, that she has made hosts of friends who have never seen

rather reduced her press work, though she is shortly bringing out a new novel.

Among those whose work is chiefly in the recording of fashion and dress Mrs. Aria is perhaps most widely known of all, as she is



MRS. ARIA.

Photo by Downey, London.

assuredly the busiest. She comes of a family of writing instincts, her sister, only to mention one of its members, being "Frank Danby," whose sketches of middle class Jewish life in London were incisive as well as realistic.

In the *Queen*, the *Lady's Pictorial*, the *Gentlewoman*, and *Hearth and Home*, Mrs. Aria's work appears, and in the two latter she replies to correspondents, telling them how to renovate old gowns, to utilise effectively the most apparently irreconcilable and useless trifles, or settles the momentous question whether the new summer gown shall be green or blue.

The chronicling of modes and makes was formerly done in somewhat bold and unimaginative style, unworthy indeed of the sentimental and alluring aspect of its subject. To Mrs. Aria may be credited the introduction into fashion articles of a more distinctive personal enthusiasm for a pretty hat or a becoming cloak, and she has also been of the first to discern the interest of dress upon the stage, both as an influence upon and a reflex of the fashions of the hour.

Another authority whose writings help the uninventive woman to avoid the dreadful disgrace of dowdiness, is Mrs. Eliza Clarke who has been associated with *The Lady*

since its commencement. In these columns, too, she writes many of the leading articles, and notes on subjects of general interest to ladies. She has also been a regular contributor to the *Lady's Pictorial* for many years upon dress and the novelties of the shops, and has written much in many directions.

A very wide juvenile acquaintance indeed is that possessed by Mrs. Johnson, who, as "Levana," conducts the "Children's Salon," which is such a popular feature of the *Gentlewoman*. Mrs. Johnson began her journalistic career on the *Queen* and that bright little weekly *Woman*, and possesses boundless energy and vivacity, as her really enthusiastic work in the capacity of honorary secretary to the Society of Women Journalists would be enough to show. But, over and beyond all this, she is art critic to the *Gentlewoman*, a field of labour in which she is keenly interested, and speaks with discernment and discretion, she writes a syndicated letter for several country papers, and contributes a column to the *Sunday Times*.

Nursing is a department of the more



MRS. JOHNSON.

feminine aspect of the Press, for which there is a very wide circle of interested readers, provided that the subject be treated with specialised knowledge, not only of the "true



Miss O'Conor Eccles
AND
Mrs. H. Armstrong



Photos by Van der Veyde,
Russell & Sons, and
Chancellor.

inwardness " of nurses' lives, but of their professional work.

Miss Honor Morton, of the weekly *Nursing Supplement* of the *Hospital*, combines in a rare degree the two callings of journalist and trained nurse. The high qualifications of the latter vocation she acquired in the London Hospital, going through the full course of ward duties from the probationer's stage to final certificates with great distinction and success.

Gradually, literary instincts asserted themselves, and she wrote for the *Daily News* and other papers until she undertook regular work specially connected with her own profession. She gives the warmest practical support to all well considered movements for promoting the welfare of this most important body of genuinely working women, and had much to do at the outset with the establishment of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, so dear to the heart of the Princess of Wales.

In the excellent scheme of the Nurses Co-operation—by which private nurses are enabled to benefit by their full earnings, minus only a trifling commission, instead of receiving wretched pittances from so-called "establishments of nursing," while their employers take all that is paid for their services—she also took an organising part. She is the author of several useful books on

nursing and nurse training, and it is not generally known that she was the original promoter, and is still the energetic secretary of the pleasant dinner of women writers, which has now become an annual fixture.

Miss O'Conor Eccles is another of the Irish sisterhood on the Press, and comes from Roscommon, with which her family has been associated for many centuries. One of her

ancestors, indeed, founded, in 1265, the famous monastery for Dominican monks which exists there.

Her work lies much with the *Windsor Magazine*, but to the *Sketch* and many other of the weekly papers she is also a regular contributor, having a bright and pleasant style and treatment, which she says herself that she owes to her father's wise direction of her reading in earlier days. She is a good "interviewer," has written one or two books, and finds time occasionally to turn out short stories.

Interviewing is also specially successfully managed by Miss Margaret Bateson, of the *Queen*, who cast in this form a very useful mass of information which she gathered in the course of a series of "Talks with Professional Women," and afterwards republished in book form. Like Miss May Abraham and Miss Clara Collet, she has thoroughly mastered

card leaving (which always seem grievous puzzles to those who are going up in the social scale), wedding parties, coming-out dances, and those other functions not of every day happening, which appear to



Photos by
Elliott & Fry
and
Alfred Ellis.

MISS E. S. Hardy.
MISS J. Robinson

the chief problems, statistical and otherwise, of the labour question as it affects women, and her studies in this subject are invariably marked by common sense, sympathy, and a sound perception of modern economics.

No woman's newspaper is complete without its column of "etiquette," in which the uninitiated are instructed in the mysteries of

present difficulties of deportment to many people.

Mrs. Lucie Heaton Armstrong has made this department her own, and in the *Lady's Pictorial* and elsewhere gives kindly counsel both generally and individually. One or two books from her pen have appeared, dealing with various aspects of the social amenities; but she is also a busy worker in other branches of the press. She rarely misses a first night, or a private view, and chronicles the feminine celebrities present

and the gowns they wore with pleasant ease. A pretty series of "Doll Stories" for children is also due to her.

A department in which women are only beginning to effect an entry is in the "black and white" drawing for the illustrated papers. Miss Sybil A. H. Robinson, of the *Daily Graphic*, though young in years and in professional experience, has already made her mark here, and finds abundant demand for such time as she has at her disposal, when the first claims upon it of Milford-lane are satisfied.

The daughter of an architect, and trained at South Kensington, Miss Robinson's success is proof that good work finds its market in journalism without favour or introduction. Some five years ago, Mr. Gilbert Thomas, the art editor of the *Daily Graphic*, sought high and low for a lady artist, a colleague I often want in special commissions as to matters particularly affecting our own sex.

One morning there came to the office a portfolio of sketches accompanied by a modest little note saying that the writer would be pleased if he thought them at all promising, to have her name placed upon the list of those for whom he might some day be able to find employment. Well, they indicated exactly the "touch" he wanted; I happened to be going in a few days to the Colour Loft at Chatham Dockyard, and her first commission was to accompany me.

Since then she has done all sorts of pictures, from studies of dresses in Royal trousseaux to sick children in hospital; from flower shows to the Army Clothing Factory. She is a frequent contributor to the *Graphic* and illustrates often the tales in the *Golden Penny*.

Miss Evelyn Stuart Hardy is another whose name merits mention in this connection, being much associated with the Art Departments of the *St. James's Budget*, the *Sport-*

ing and Dramatic, and *Gentlewoman*. She belongs to an "artistic" family, as her father and brother, Mr. David and Mr. Paul Hardy, are well-known with pen and pencil, and perhaps may claim herself a "record" in her profession, as she received her first commission at the age of nine.

It is perhaps permissible to call her a kind of "John Strange Winter" in black and white, as her inclinations have always been towards military subjects, and the late Captain Drake, of the Royal Horse Guards, seeing her bent, gave her much technical instruction in the correctness of detail. With officers and troopers of the "Blues" she is an especial favourite, and has found many models from life among them. At

Aldershot on one occasion she was suspected of being a Nihilist, and another time was taken for a French spy when making some sketches of a fort, but in each dilemma her soldier friends were quickly able to show that she was not a dangerous character, and to restore her confiscated studies.

There is a small colony of American women in London acting as correspondents to Transatlantic papers, and of these, Mrs. Lathrop may well stand

as a representative. In this country she is perhaps better known by her maiden name of Annie Wakeman, as it is only a very few years since she married Mr. Lorin Lathrop, the United States Consul at Bristol.

She came over in 1883, and began her work here by some clever articles on the then less well-studied "seamy side" of East End working, and other class life. It was through a speech made by her, at one of the earliest gatherings of the Institute of Journalists, that the committee decided to admit women to its membership.

She contributes to the *New York Herald*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Record*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. At one time she wrote much for the *Sunday Times*,



MRS. ANNIE WAKEMAN LATHROP

Photo by Passingham, Brighton.

and is also a frequent writer in the American magazines.

On the Provincial papers, too, ladies are beginning to obtain a footing, not only as writers of "London Letters," which has been practically, hitherto, their chief department in such columns, but by taking up matters of local philanthropic and social interest, and by editing a certain amount of the space with consideration of the particular interests and pursuits of their district. "Kathleen," of the *Leeds Mercury*, may be cited as a specially successful exponent of this branch of work.

But space fails, and the list of those of whom one would speak is still long. There is Mrs. Crawford, the able French correspondent of the *Daily News* and *Truth*, and for omitting longer notice of her one would plead as excuse that she lives in Paris and not among us.

There are Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Chamberlain, "Belle" of the *World* (a strictly kept anonymity), Miss Strutt-Cavell, Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Elliot James, Miss Dyer (art critic on the *Daily News*),

Mrs. Lankester ("Penelope," of syndicated letter fame), Miss Drew (another of the "Irishry" of the Press), Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Pember, Miss Laura Smith, Mrs. Panton, Miss Stronach, and Mrs. Greenwood, all doing good work and pleasing many readers.

It was only possible, however, to choose some among many, and I have tried to select those representative of the various branches in which women stand foremost on the Press, and whose position has been won, and is maintained by hard work.

A point on which we may congratulate ourselves so far, I think, is, that English lady journalists have not so far descended to any of the vulgar sensationalism and semi-detective business which has discredited the American reporteresses in too many instances. In the legitimate endeavours to secure information of public interest, most proprietors and editors would share, I believe, the opinion that I once heard Mr. W. L. Thomas, the managing director of the *Graphic* and *Daily Graphic*, publicly express, that for conscientiousness, punctuality, and accuracy the women of the press compared very favourably with the men. But happily our editorial methods and our own instincts as gentlewomen do not lead us to try being barmaids, or going out with costermongers on a bank holiday for the purpose of "getting copy," and we very much repudiate anything of the kind as unworthy of the dignity and traditions of our profession.

There is, of course, a large—a sadly large—contingent of women who undertake the poorest kind of hack work, paid for

at the lowest rates; and some few are attempting to earn a living by shorthand reporting.

For such easily accomplished or mechanical labour, the field is alike very limited and very overcrowded; and a girl's chances in the profession are poor indeed unless she has some marked vein of originality. But with that, and a fair start, the calling is one to appeal to the ambitious and the independent, for if the big prizes are not numerous, they are at least bestowed without favour, and will fall only to those who best deserve them.



MRS. HUMPHRY.
"Madge" of *Truth*.

July 1896



AFTER FIFTY.

N the wrong side, I must admit ;
 But only by a year or so.
 I still can run and dance a bit ;
 Still shoot and hunt and fish, you know !
 Why is it then that I am dubbed
 " Old fogey," by " the fillies," eh ?
 Why is it I am rather snubbed
 When younger fellows come their way ?

II.

My compliments are laughed at now,
 Or taken with composure—why ?
 Ten years ago, they flushed the brow
 Of sweet eighteen, so charmingly !
 They titter at a wink from *me*,
 " You bad old man ! " (A sorry jest !)
 They think it sad at fifty-three,
 And hint that *forty* suit me best.

III.

What does it mean ? I still am straight
 As any lath—though past my spring,
 I still contrive to vault a gate,
 And walk with quite an easy swing.
 I do not stoop, but hold my head
 As high as in my " golden days."
 A little bald ! I've heard it said ;
 And rumour hints I've joined " the Greys."

IV.

And that is all ! Yet, pretty girls
 Are far too daughterly to please
 One who still dotes on glossy curls
 And does not own rheumatic knees !
 No bouquets *billets doux* secrete
 For *me* as in the days of yore,
 No sudden blushes when we meet,
 Nor stolen glances any more !

V.

Au contraire, on my shoulders broad
 Fair Ella lays her hand so white.
 And calmly asks—the pretty fraud—
 If I slept fairly well last night ?
 She hopes I don't feel overdone
 By all the tennis that we had.
 She rather feared the blazing sun
 Would tell upon me ! No ! *So glad !*

VI.

I wish to goodness that the fair
 Were not so much *at ease* with me !
 Would flirt a bit—coquet—but there !
 They won't waste shafts on fifty-three.
 Heigho ! It is a woman's way,
 And doesn't suit my book. But still,
 Rather than lose the hussies, they
 May use me even as they will.

F. B. DOVETON.

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Billington, Mary Frances
Leading lady journalists

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